

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 NEAE-00 IO-12 AID-20 ACDA-19 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 EA-11 EUR-25 NIC-01 OMB-01

RSR-01 /169 W

----- 053067

P R 121520 ZNOPR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3758

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4292

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, IN, SK

SUBJ: SIKKIM

REF : NEW DELHI 4291 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LIMITED SOURCES AVAILABLE TO US HERE INDICATE SIKKIM IS QUIET. PRESS SAYS INDIAN ARMY IS EXPERIENCING SOME DIFFICULTY IN DEPLOYING QUICKLY TO OUTLYING REGIONS. GOI SEEMS DETERMINED TO TRY TO PUSH THROUGH A NEW POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHILE PRESERVING THE CHOGYAL AS TITULAR RULER. END SUMMARY.

1. AS TO THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SIKKIM, I CONTINUE TO BE DEPENDENT ON THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE INDIAN PRESS ASIDE FROM SOURCE NOTED IN REFTEL. A MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER APRIL 12 THAT SIKKIM IS " QUIET". HOWEVER, THE TIMES OF INDIA CORRESPONDENT REPORTED FROM RANGPO ON THE INDIA- SIKKIM BORDER, THAT THE ARMY IS ENCOUNTERING SOME DIFFICULTY IN QUICKLY RESTORING LAW AND ORDER; FEW ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS HAVE REMAINED AT THEIR POSTS IN OUTLYING AREAS; THE ARMY IS GUARDING HOUSES OF POLITICAL LEADERS IN GANGTOK BUT DOES NOT
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HAVE ENOUGH MANPOWER TO DEPLOY THROUGH SIKKIM AND SOME AREAS ARE STILL CONTROLLED " BY VOLUNTEERS."

2. THE GOI HAS BEEN " DISCOURAGING" CORRESPONDENTS FROM GOING TO SIKKIM. UK HIGH COMMISSION UNDERSTANDS SOME REPORTERS THAT WERE IN SIKKIM HAVE BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE. A QUICK CHECK BY THE EMBASSY INDICATES THAT PTI, REUTERS, AND TIMES OF INDIA CORRESPONDENTS AND A UNI STRINGER, ALL INDIAN NATIONALS, MAY ONLY REPORTERS NOW IN SIKKIM.

3. A WIRE SERVICE UNATTRIBUTED BACKGROUNDER BY FOREIGN SECRETARY LGEWAL SINGH YESTERDAY SAID THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT

BE PERTURBED BY CRITICISM AND WOULD TAKE A HAND IN BRINGING ABOUT RECONCILIATION AND APOLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE BACKGROUNDER SETS FORTH A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT CRISIS AND CONCLUDES THAT POPULAR FORCES NOW REFUSE TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE CHOGYAL AND DEMAND THAT THE GOI SHOULD BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT.

4. THE MINISTRY' S JUNIOR DESK OFFICER FOR SIKKIM TOLD US THAT B. S. DAS, THE NEW PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO NEW DELHI AND NOT TO THE CHOGYAL. HE SAID THIS WAS NATURAL IN THE SITUATION WHERE THE CHOGYAL HAD ASKED THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION. PREVIOUSLY INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CHOGYAL BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND HAD ACTED FORMALLY AS HIS ADVISOR.

5. THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS TOLD BY FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY (WEST) AVTAR SINGH, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM SIKKIM, THAT THE INDIANS HOPED TO KEEP THE CHOGYAL ON AS A TITULAR RULER. SINGH SAID THE INDIANS WERE ADVISING THE CHOGYAL TO COOPERATE IN WORKING OUT A COMPROMISED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE NEPALI SIKKIMESE. SINGH THOUGHT THE CHOGYAL MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO PROTECT HIS POSITION UNLESS HE TOOK THIS ADVICE.

6. THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION IS VERY SIMILAR TO OURS: THE UNREST WAS NOT STIMULATED BY THE INDIANS, BUT AFTER IT STARTED THE INDIANS MOVED IN WILLFULLY TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR POSITION. SPECULATION OF INDIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE DEMONSTRATORS MAY HAVE BEEN FED BY MOVEMENT OF NEPALIS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN SIKKIM AND DARJEELING. SOME SIKKIMESE NEPALIS HAVE CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE NEPALIS IN DARJEELING AND THEY MAY HAVE RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL

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SOME ASSIST FROM THEM IN MOUNTING THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN SIKKIM.

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